

CHURCH OF GOD

Evangel

*I Prayed to
the Devil*

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July 22, 1957

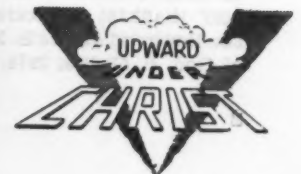


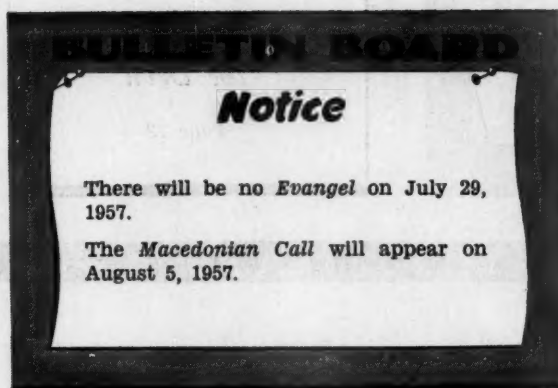
*Paul's
Thorn
in the
Flesh*

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*Jesus
Heals*

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CAMP MEETING SCHEDULE — 1957

Arkansas—July 15-20—Campground, Bald Knob (D. C. Boatwright)
 Iowa—July 31-August 4—Free Methodist Campground, Birmingham (V. B. Rains)
 Maryland-Delaware-Washington, D. C.—July 29-August 4—Campground, Hurlock, Maryland (Lindsey Pratt)
 Michigan—July 29-August 3—Campground, Fenton (James L. Slay)
 Missouri—August 5-10—Campground, Leadwood (Vep Ellis)
 New England States—July 22-28—Campground, Appleton, Maine (T. L. Forester)
 New Jersey—July 25-28—Millville Local Church, 14 Mulberry Street (James A. Cross)
 New York—July 25-27—Bayridge Church, Brookline, N. Y. (H. D. Williams)
 West Virginia—July 23-28—Field House, Beckley (Ray H. Hughes)
 Western Canada—July 30-August 4—International Bible College, Estevan Saskatchewan (Floyd Timmerman)
 Eastern District Spanish Convention—August 7-10—New York (James A. Cross)

 Please note our change of address, W. M. Morrow, Box 310, Petrolia, Texas.

We are opening a Bible School in Salunayan, Mid-sayap, Contabato, on June 10, 1957. We are facing the problems on accordions, organs, typewriters and generator for electricity. If any of the brethren have these in stock and no longer need them, we will be very thankful to receive them. Please send them to the Reverend James B. Reesor, superintendent, Church of God, P. O. Box 2971, Manila, Philippines.

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CHURCH OF GOD Evangel

America's Oldest Pentecostal Publication

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DECLARATION OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE

1. In the verbal inspiration of the Bible. 2. In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 3. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead; that He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor. 4. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins. 5. That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. 6. In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost. 7. Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people. 8. In the baptism of the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart. 9. In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. 10. In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 11. Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement. 12. In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet. 13. In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years. 14. In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous and eternal punishment for the wicked.

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We Are Not

Drying Up



The Editor's Message

I have just returned from the North Carolina camp meeting. My heart is aglow with the ineffable blessings of God I both witnessed and received. It does not matter what state it was in, for the glory of the meeting is duplicated in every state's camp this summer. Every state has had or will have the joyous reunions of friends and brethren, the triumphant reports of progress, the glad rejoicing of the redeemed, and the careful attention to the ministry of the Word. This is camp meeting time, part of the spiritual fabric of the Church of God.

Detractors of the Church have been saying that we are "dead," "cold," "formal," or "drying up." How wrong they are! Since the beginning of the Pentecostal revival about the turn of the century, it has been predicted by prophets of gloom that the day would come when we would lose our zeal for God and go the way of other religious groups.

At this camp meeting season there is a dramatic reaffirmation of all the things we hold dear. I witnessed the throngs that gathered to worship God, and the streams of those who filled the altars to seek peace with God. My heart has been warmed by the scene of radiant-faced men and women, many of them in the beauty and sturdiness of youth, praying around the altars, offering words of counsel and encouragement to those tarrying for the baptism of the Holy Ghost or asking forgiveness for their sins. Again I heard the rejoicing of the children of God, saw men and women dancing in the Spirit, and heard heavenly singing from sincere Christians down whose cheeks tears coursed in iridescent streams.

There were even greater evidences of the vitality of God's people: the ardent study of God's Word and the hungry attention to the proclamation of that Word.

Besides the souls that were blessed, numbers were healed of various afflictions and diseases. The number of those who came forward for prayer for healing

was testimony to the tremendous faith in divine healing, and the number who were healed is testimony to the efficacy of that faith.

All these blessings, along with the unfeigned fellowship of the ministers and members, are a spiritual banquet. This fellowship—how real and how delightful it is! Weary laborers come from the field and are strengthened by spiritual brotherhood. Here is love, I thought; love as it was expressed in Bible days, and used as an instrument to increase the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

No, we are not drying up. We are growing up—in grace and in knowledge—unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

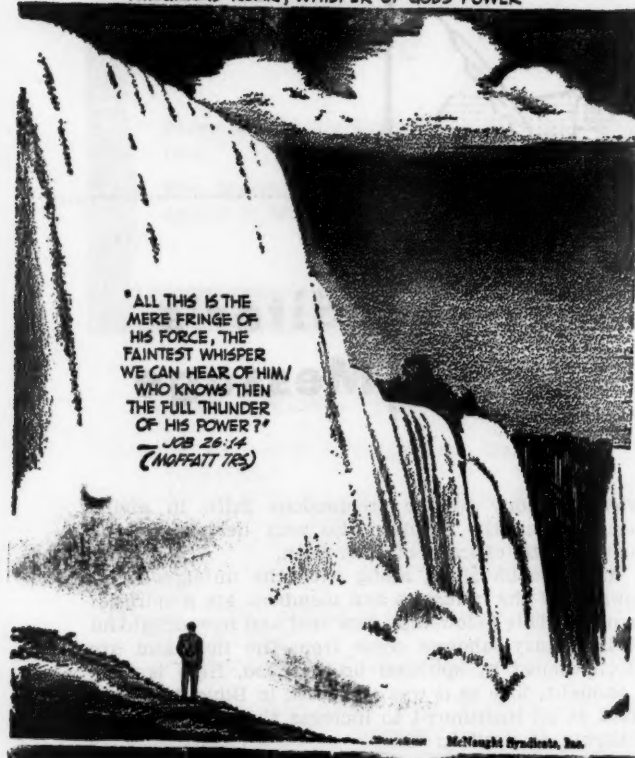
(COVER PICTURE)

JESUS HEALING THE SICK

Matthew 15:29

What a gathering of human misery, helplessness and disease! The mother, with her emaciated child in her arms, another bearing one who has the hopeless look of idiocy, a sick man prostrate on the ground, a wretched cripple straining to touch the hem of His garment, and still another, seemingly half dead, supported by some pitying friend—certainly here is wretchedness enough to demand the aid of one divine. For such alone could help in sorrows and extremities like these! The Saviour in the midst, the fountain from which health shall flow to all, presses the forehead of the child while the rest await the power of his miraculous touch to be delivered of their "diseases and torments." The picture is sternly realistic and tells the story with pathetic power.

NIAGARA'S ROAR, WHISPER OF GOD'S POWER



THE HISTORY OF divine healing is as old as the history of man. The garden into which God placed the man He had created contained the tree of life. In Genesis 20:17, we find a simple but profound statement of divine healing, "So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife." God promised to the children of Israel as they fled from Egyptian bondage, "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). How wonderful that this promise extends to the present generation! The same divine sacrifice which secures salvation to the believer, provides healing as expressed so eloquently by Isaiah, "He was bruised for our iniquities and by his stripes we are healed."

The promise of healing extends not only to the present, but as we go *upward under Christ* we are assured that healing will extend through all eternity by John's record of his vision of Paradise, "and he shewed me a pure river of water of life, . . . and was there the tree of life, . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1, 2).

The divine healing of King Hezekiah is described in 2 Kings 20, and again in Isaiah 38. This example teaches us a great deal concerning divine healing.

"I Have Heard Thy Prayer,

I Have Seen Thy Tears:

Behold, I Will Heal Thee."

A. HEALING IS A RESULT OF PRAYER

When it became apparent to King Hezekiah that death was imminent he began to pray earnestly and weep before God. The prayer touched God. With all the power of the universe at His command, God was touched with compassion by the prayer of a helpless, dying man. The answer was flashed back:

"I have heard thy prayer,
I have seen thy tears;
Behold, I will heal thee."

How often—oh, thank God—has this same answer been signaled to a faithful servant of God following prayer. Indeed, are not all healings the result of prayer?

B. DIVINE INTERVENTION DELAYS DEATH

The Scripture says that Hezekiah was sick unto death. The normal course of nature would have brought death. Divine deflection of the course of nature, brought about through prayer, provided an extension of life.

The prophet Isaiah called for treatment of the infection with a plaster of figs, a common remedy of the day, but this in no way detracted from the miracle. Neither the power of God, faith in God, nor praise to

 ★ 2 Kings 20:5, "Turn again and tell Heze- ★
 ★ kiah the captain of my people, Thus saith ★
 ★ the Lord, the God of David thy father, I ★
 ★ have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy ★
 ★ tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third ★
 ★ day thou shalt go up unto the house of the ★
 ★ Lord." ★
 ★*****

By Louis H. Cross

Pastor, Elizabethton Church of God

God was diminished by the treatment. The figs without God's power would have accomplished nothing; yet God saw fit to work with the figs in place. Without divine healing the disease would have been fatal; yet, Hezekiah's life was prolonged for fifteen years.

The healing was not instantaneous, but this in no way detracted from the miracle. The man who was sick unto death had received the promise:

"I have heard thy prayer,
 I have seen thy tears:
 Behold, I will heal thee."

To Hezekiah this promise was sufficient. God's promises are always sufficient. God's promises are always sure. Hezekiah recovered. The healing was as real as any instances of instantaneous healing. God was given the glory.

C. HEALING IS THE PREROGATIVE OF GOD

The message of deliverance was given by the Prophet Isaiah. However, Isaiah was required, as is every minister of God, to give some messages which were not so pleasant. It was as much the responsibility of Isaiah to carry the warning for preparation of imminent death as it was to carry the message of deliverance.

This was the prophet whose lips had been anointed with fire from the altar, whose sin had been purged. This same prophet had proclaimed, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This man was not lacking in holiness. This man was not small in faith. This was a man who devoutly believed in a God who loved His people and would work miracles for their deliverance. Yet he came, burdened with duty, to Hezekiah and said, "Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order for thou shalt die and not live."

Prayer changes things. Imagine the joy that came to Isaiah's heart when another message came from God. Having been faithful to perform an unpleasant task, Isaiah returned to Hezekiah with glory on his face and praises on his lips to deliver the message:

"I have heard thy prayers,
 I have seen thy tears:
 Behold, I will heal thee."

It was not the prophet, not the man of faith, but God who made the decision that healing was to come. The prophet was the faithful messenger.

Indeed, is this not wonderful! Can we of such limited wisdom understand that there are times that God has something better than healing for us? Read with me in Hebrews 11 of those that were stoned, sawn asunder, slain, and that were destitute, afflicted, tormented. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us . . ." (Hebrews 11:39, 40).

The very meaning of divine healing is healing sent at the discretion of God according to His superior wisdom. God listens to the petition and decides the best course for us if we can but have the faith to yield to Him and to trust in Him.

I was called recently to the hospital to pray for a baby four months old. The physician had given them no hope. The parents, who did not attend any church, had been told he was dying. In desperation, they had begged the nurses to call a minister. I knelt at the side of the baby whose eyes had been fixed for some time. With every confidence in God, but so aware of my own limitations and of the family's grief, I began to pray. My lips faltered; the words came hesitantly; tears filled my eyes. Eloquence was forgotten in desire for communion with God. Somehow I expressed that God knew what was best for the baby, the parents, for the home, and asked for the baby's life if it could be given in His will. The answer came:

"I have heard thy prayer,
 I have seen thy tears:
 Behold, I will heal . . ."

For the first time in over an hour the baby's eyes moved as the prayer was concluded. Today the baby is well. Thank God for divine healing.

THE GLORIOUS golden sun was shining through a clear sky. Gaily plumaged birds were making merry. All nature was in tune with the infinite. But hark, there was the sound of angry voices. In just a few moments a cruel mob had gathered. Angry shouts and cruel curses were heard. Fierce hands were clutching and tearing at a young man. This young man's serene face was turned toward heaven. But the mob was raging, and finally one of the strongest men shoved the youth forward so that he stood apart. Immediately a brutal stone was hurled, knocking the young man to his knees. This seemed to be the signal for more stones, because stone after stone bruised the beaten body of the young man. He fell in a faint; a bloodthirsty cry went up from the mob. But look, the young man raised himself. Blood was streaming down his face. His flesh was black and blue. Suddenly a light seemed to radiate from his face, and in a clear voice he spoke: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." His voice broke the silence that followed as he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Then it seemed as though he fell asleep. The mob broke up and quickly dispersed.

This happened when the Church was in its infancy. Following this incident a great persecution broke out against the Church and against the devout followers of the rejected Christ. There was a young man named Saul that had consented to the death of a Christian, and this same Saul made havoc of the Church, entered into every house, and dragged out men and women and committed them to prison. Gentle men that loved Jesus were persecuted and thrown into prison by the hand of Saul. Saul worked fervently and felt that he was the servant of God to stamp out this heretic and fanatic new religion.

One day Saul, "yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven." Immediately Saul and his entourage stopped. With a great thud, Saul fell to the ground, overcome by the glory of the revelation of Jesus Christ. A voice spoke from the brightness, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?"

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Saul, trembling and astonished, asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

From that moment, Saul was a changed man, and began to promote the cause of Christ. At first the saints would not believe in his conversion, but after preaching and proving himself, he became the greatest of all apostles. Known as Paul, this man proclaimed the message of Jesus. He told of the wonderful love of our Lord. Paul evangelized. He carried the message to the people that had never heard of Christ, and won them for heaven. The Holy Ghost was in full control of his life, and led him to the places where he could have an effective ministry for Christ.

Paul's Thorn

There is one fact about the life of Paul that seems to puzzle many of our people today. I quote 2 Corinthians 12:7: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? There are two very common theories concerning this. Let us examine these two theories in the light of God's Word, and then let us see what the Bible says the thorn really was.

Some say that Paul had a secret sin, that he was the greatest sinner of his day. They say that he continued on in sin and could not help but sin. That is not true. We believe the Bible to be the divinely inspired Word of God, so listen to what the Word says in Romans 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Verse 18: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Verses 22, 23: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Paul plainly stated in these verses that henceforth we should not serve sin, and that being then made free from sin, we became the servants of righteousness. If we are free from sin, we are no longer servants of sin. The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.

The statement is made that the soul and mind are kept pure, but the body sins. Listen to this statement of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Paul prayed that the body as well as the spirit would be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord. Paul also stated that because of the

in the Flesh

By Linwood Jacobs

Pastor, Marion, S. C.

wonderful promises of God we should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh first, and then the spirit, thereby perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If we are preserved blameless and cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, I am sure we will be free from all willful sin. 2 Timothy 2:21, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

NOW LET US LISTEN to Paul's personal testimony. Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." He was not a sinner, but a living witness to the power of God—the power of God that could and still does keep a consecrated man from committing willful sin. Hallelujah!

I am sure that already we have proved by the Bible that Paul was not a sinner, but that he was saved by grace and was a true child of God. Let us examine the second theory. I quote from a very learned expositor of the Scriptures: "The fact is, Paul was sick. He was the sickest of men. He had opthalmia, a disease of the eyes. When Paul stood before them, his eyes filled with unspeakable pus and matter and this unspeakable pus ran down his face as he stood before them. He was a pitiful and an appealing sight to them as is any man with the disease."

Now let us consider if this was a disease. Paul did not get it by infection. Jesus Christ gave it to him. He prayed the Lord to heal him of this sickness three times. The Lord did not heal him but told him that His grace was sufficient for him. Some will use 2 Corinthians 10:10 to substantiate this theory, so let us consider this verse. "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

There is nothing in this Scripture or in any other that tells us that Paul's physical condition was weak. Paul was simply quoting what some of his enemies were saying. Listen to Paul's reply in the very next verse, "Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present." In other words, Paul says, "You say that my letters are weighty and

powerful, and when I come to where you are you will find that I personally am weighty and powerful." That does not sound like the words of a weakling but rather like the words of a strong man who is confident of himself.

If anyone actually approached Christ for healing, he was never turned aside. Matthew 9:35, "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." Matthew 8:16, "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick."

Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." If you will give me any Scripture reference where Jesus turned away an honest seeker, then I will believe you. Until then, however, I shall never believe that Jesus turned away a seeker unless the seeker was asking for something that was out of the will of God. It is not God's will for anyone to go through this life suffering. Therefore, Paul's thorn in the flesh could not be sickness.

What then was this thorn in the flesh that was given to Paul? Let us turn to the Bible for our answer. Read again in our text, 2 Corinthians 12:7, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh."

2 Corinthians 12:2, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven." It seems that Paul was caught up into heaven and that he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter. Paul was elevated—exalted—and to keep him from vanity, a thorn in the flesh was given him. What was this thorn? The last few lines in verse 7 tell us that this thorn was the messenger of Satan. The word *messenger* is a translation from the Greek word *angelos* which occurs 188 times in the New Testament; 181 times it is translated "angel," and seven times it is translated "messenger." The two words mean exactly the same thing. Jesus in Matthew speaks of the devil and his angels. We find in Revelation that the devil and his angels made war against Michael and his angels. Jesus said, "Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." We see that the devil has angels or messengers. These are personalities that carry out the orders of the devil; they come and go at his bidding.

I believe that the messenger of Satan who was Paul's thorn in the flesh was an angel of the devil whom the devil had put on Paul's trail to persecute, revile and buffet him. Paul would go to a place and preach the gospel. The people would be stirred for God. A mighty revival would break out and souls would be won for God. In the midst of the revival, great persecution would break out against Paul. This messenger of Satan would stir up sinful men, and they would cast Paul in prison and beat him.

In the Old Testament, God refers to individuals as

JESUS

being pricks and thorns. Numbers 33:55, "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell." Joshua 23:13, "Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you."

Listen to the voice of Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27: "I am . . . in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." I ask you, does that sound like a sick man? Does that sound like someone who was among the very sickest of men? No, but it does sound as though a special demon was sent by the devil to follow this blessed man of God and try to hinder his ministry.

2 Corinthians 12:8, 9, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee. . . ." Why would Jesus tell Paul that His grace was sufficient for him? Matthew 5:11, 12, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Jesus definitely promises healing for every disease, but He tells us that we shall have to suffer persecutions, and He tells us that we are blessed when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Let us not use 2 Corinthians 12:7 as a cloak for sin or a cover for unbelief, but let us take it as God intended for us to understand it. If it becomes our lot, as it did Paul's in 1 Corinthians 4:11, to experience "both hunger, and thirst and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace," let us take all buffeting and persecution with a smile of victory, because the great day is coming when we shall receive our reward.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Paul had sown persecution against the Church, and because of that he had to suffer persecution. At last, history tells us, he died a martyr's death. Paul sealed his testimony with his blood, but to the end he was faithful. He suffered for the cause of Christ, and because of that suffering he went home to receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

SINCE JESUS WAS on earth, there probably has been no period when healing was needed or talked of more than now. There has hardly been a period when more varied attempts have been made at practicing it. Whatever practices the ages have developed, whatever criticisms, destructive or constructive, Jesus remains indomitably our Healer. May He help us in studying an experience of healing that will enlighten us on His healing today.

Jesus was on his last journey to Jerusalem. He and His disciples crossed the River Jordan near the spot where, about three years before, John had baptized Him in Jordan and proclaimed Him "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Not far from this place He had blessed the little children as they were brought to Him, and near, too, was a hill called Golgotha. His ministry of the gospel in word and deed lay behind him in Perea and Galilee.

A short distance from Jordan in their path was the city of palms, Jericho. It was, perhaps, along this same route that Joshua had led the Israelites into the Land of Promise and had at the command of God marched around the walls of Jericho thirteen times before they fell down flat. Jesus moved slowly toward the city. Some of the multitude apparently went before Him and others followed behind.

As they approached the city, a disturbance developed by the wayside. Matthew 20:29-34, and Mark 10:46-52, tell us that two blind men were by the wayside begging. One of them, perhaps the spokesman, was called Bartimaeus. Luke says that a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging (Luke 18:35). Let us think of this interested person as blind Bartimaeus. He was an insignificant man with no record of accomplishment, and no influential relatives, but perhaps he was quite well-known locally because of his affliction. When he heard the sounds of many trudging feet, and the low rumble of many voices, he asked those who were near him what was happening. "And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," Luke 18:37. This information fired the hope of this man who was distressed. He was unable to live a normal life. Not having his sight, he was unable to work for

HEALS

By H. A. Norman

Pastor, Troy, Ohio

a living. Sometime, somewhere, somehow, he had developed the idea that this Jesus of Nazareth was a healer and that He would pay attention to anyone who called upon Him. Whether or not it entered his mind that Jesus would not pass this way again, Bartimaeus acted on the fact that Jesus was in his presence now. There was only one way up for this man, that was through Christ. There is only one way up for any person, that is through Christ. There is only one way up for the Church, that is through Christ.

There was no more convenient time for Bartimaeus. No future date to expect his blessing impressed him. His need was now. His opportunity was now. Jesus was there. The blind man was desperate. He cried, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." The desperate, needy man was rebuked by some of the crowd and advised to keep calm, quiet, and peaceful. The rebuke and advice only intensified his fervor, and he cried the louder, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." He seemed aware of the fact that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," Psalms 46:1. How sad that reason's rebuke may often keep a man down, but to go upward with Christ we may sometimes have to withstand it. Our interest and enthusiasm must be strong enough to overcome its opposing disinterest and to march on in Christ even without acclaim or applause. That is the kind of interest Bartimaeus had. He was given advice which would have left him by the wayside to die in his condition while Jesus the Healer, and the multitude moved on into Jericho, but Jesus heard his cry.

The procession came to a halt. Necks stretched. Eyes peered. Whispers were exchanged. What was happening? "Jesus stood." Thank God that Jesus has time to stop at the cry of someone who needs, wants, and believes Him. He loved this man neither more nor less than he loves each of us today. He has time to stop today when we call on Him in spirit and in truth. Moments of suspense passed as humble hearts, expectant eyes, and a blind man waited to see the salvation of God.

The voice of Jesus broke the silence as He command-

ed the blind man to be brought to Him. Bartimaeus waited for a blessing. He was helpless. Even those of us with eyes are helpless if we are without Christ. Other moments of anxious waiting passed as the blind man was brought. Then, Jesus, our healer, Bartimaeus' healer, asked that momentous question, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" (Luke 18:41). His time had come. With no apparent hesitancy, Bartimaeus acknowledged his own helplessness, his need, his dependence on Jesus to fill that need, and Jesus' ability to meet that need. "Lord, that I may receive my sight," Luke 18:41. Blind faith, no physical vision, a desperately helpless man, a loud, fervent cry—a man whom Jesus loved was Bartimaeus. "And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee," Luke 18:41. The following verse states that this man immediately received his sight, followed Jesus, and glorified God.

SHALL WE ASCRIBE this experience to history only, or shall we permit this same Jesus who healed Bartimaeus to be our contemporary healer? The person of the Holy Ghost is present with us today to listen to our cry, to stop, to command, to heal. Bartimaeus found his way from a downward, roadside beggar position, to an upward, healed, following, praising position.

A lady in our church congregation stood to her feet as the service progressed. When she was recognized, she stated simply that she was not well and wanted prayer. Eyes looked around, as she came forward to an altar, probably as they did when Bartimaeus was in need. The church as a group bowed in prayer. Jesus heard and answered prayer. The lady testified that she felt she was on the verge of a collapse from her nervous condition. Her skin had become discolored and this had been diagnosed as eczema. After prayer her nervous condition calmed and her skin condition cleared. Jesus does heal today.

Bartimaeus has probably become quite well-known today through the song that tells of his experience, but the fact that his experience may be repeated over and over today seems little-known. We can find our way upward from where we are through Christ in healing. As we acknowledge our need, our helplessness, our reliance on Him, His ability and readiness to hear and help, as we reject advice that would hinder, and cry aloud in fervent prayer, Jesus will stop to hear us. He will say, "Thy faith hath saved thee." We, then, with the lifted Bartimaeus, shall follow Jesus and glorify God.

◆ ◆ ◆ "And Jesus said unto him,
Receive thy sight: thy
faith hath saved thee,"
Luke 18:42.

(Concluded)

THE SOURCE OF CHARACTER

B. AS A MAN THINKS OF CHRIST IN HIS HEART, SO IS HE.

The Scriptures represent Christ as the Eternal Son, the revelation of God, the First-born from the dead; the Image of the Invisible God, the Creator of all things, the Saviour and Example of the world, and the final Judge of all men.

What a man thinks of Christ is the crucial test of his character. Christ was the One who crossed the stage of human history over nineteen centuries ago, yet He did not begin His life in Bethlehem of Judea. He existed in the bosom of the Father from all eternity. He was Very God of Very God; there never was a time when He was not. He is and always has been the only begotten Son of God, the eternal Word of God, the brightness of God's everlasting glory. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. He is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

His questions were always of paramount value. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man

give in exchange for his soul?" Does not that question have value for us today? If Christ were to ask us a question that would enable us to decide whether we are prepared to work for Him and to witness for Him, would it not be that one, or the series of questions with which He tested the repentant Peter, "Lovest thou me?" Is there a more pertinent question for our age than the last one He proposed at the close of His public ministry, "What think ye of Christ?"

His birth, ministry and very life were divine mysteries. He fed the five thousand miraculously, yet knew the pangs of hunger. He gave the water of life freely, yet thirsted beside a Samaritan well. He stilled the troubled waves of Galilee, yet slept in a little boat. He spoke to Lazarus and freed him from death shackles, yet wept that His friend had died. At His death an earthquake occurred, yet on the cross He experienced the piercing agony of human pain.

Will any man say it is of little importance to him what he thinks of Jesus Christ—that whether he adopts Christ's standard of manhood, Christ's rule of conduct, Christ's measure and manner of attaining success, will not affect his own value to the world and ultimately his destiny?

C. AS A MAN THINKS IN HIS HEART OF THE BIBLE, SO IS HE.

Is the Bible the work of men's heads and hands? Is it the message of God to a world benighted and perishing, grasping after light, reaching out for help and salvation? Every system of doubt or unbelief that rejects or belittles the claims of Jesus Christ, begins by attempting to discredit some portion or rejecting the Bible as a whole.

The Bible is superior to all other religious books in its contents. It sets up the highest ethical and moral standards, enjoins the most absolute obedience, denounces every form of sin, and yet informs the sinner how he can get right with God. How could uninspired men have written a Book like that? John Wesley argued that the Bible must have been written by bad men or angels, good men or angels, or by God. He showed that it could not have been written by bad men or angels, for it condemns their souls to hell for all eternity; neither could it have been written by good men or angels, for they would not say, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was they who said it; it must, therefore, have been written by God.

The estimate of Jesus concerning the Scriptures is found in His words: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

When we accept the Bible as the Word of God, we accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God. When we seek to know the will of God that we may do it, we soon think with the Psalmist: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea,



than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:7-11).

D. AS A MAN THINKS IN HIS HEART CONCERNING SIN, SO IS HE.

The man who, in his thinking, regards sin, even when gilded and popular, as a trifle, is a serious peril to himself and a menace to society.

Sin is a failure to conform to the law of God either negatively or positively, by omission or commission. It can be understood only in the light of the law of God. The law is in itself an expression of the nature and attributes of God. Thus when men fail to live up to the law of God, or when they transgress it, they are committing an act of hostility against the Almighty. Sin is reprehensible, deserving the punishment it entails.

The Biblical concept of sin is indicated in the words used to describe it. The Hebrew term means "to deviate from the way"; the Greek terms imply a "missing the mark," "a going aside from." Sin appears in two forms, overt acts and heart sinfulness. The Scriptures describe the universality of sin. They speak to men about the totality of sin and the extent of its control over life. Invading every heart, it corrupts and mars every life. Men are then in rebellion against their Creator.

Unless something is done to rescue man from the consequences of sin, his plight will be woeful in the extreme. His separation from God will be eternal; his degradation will be complete; he will spend eternity in hell, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." But man is unable to remedy the situation. He is incapable of redeeming himself from sin, of extricating himself from the predicament, of saving himself from destruction. Unless God intervenes he is doomed forever. If man is to be saved from sin, he must be saved through Jesus Christ.

When we reflect that sin is rebellion against God, that its "wages . . . is death," we will not regard it as a trifle.

Sin is sometimes innocent-looking, but it has caused all the fears and tears and pain and woe in the world. It has made and filled all the graves in the world. It nailed the Son of God to the cross. It touched one of the shining spirits before the throne and he withdrew into a devil.

It has been said: "Sin is a disease of the soul—a paralysis that weakens, a leprosy that pollutes, a plague that tortures, a pestilence that destroys."

Will a man who sincerely thinks that he can safely sin, make a mock of sin, be saved from the consequences of his evil thinking and doing, be saved by his sincerity?

"There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," declares the Word of God.

Whatever we may think about it, "Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Any church that does not proclaim God's estimate of sin, and God's remedy for sin, will never share in the world's salvation.



E. AS A MAN THINKS IN HIS HEART ABOUT OTHERS, SO IS HE.

The evil man is quick to think evil and slow to think good of others. The dishonest man thinks honesty has fled from the earth. He will tell you that all men have their price. The man whose thoughts are corrupt and whose touch is pollution, does not have a very exalted opinion of women.

The world regards with distrust and suspicion the man who is prone to think and say evil of others. It is a sign of mediocrity for one constantly to belittle the lives of others.

The Christian's attitude is different. He believes that Jesus Christ has a message for this sin-cursed world. It is the message of salvation. The Christian is to be more than a reservoir of truth—he is to be a channel of blessing to the uttermost part of the earth. His task is to evangelize without ceasing, to witness faithfully and persistently to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. He is to proclaim with no uncertain sound the fearfulness and dread consequences of sin, and the refuge that is in Christ Jesus.

Every Christian is his brother's spiritual keeper. He is to be a witness for Christ in word and in example. Too many neglect this personal aspect of the work of Christ.

The Christian can influence others for Christ because his attitudes, as well as his nature, have been changed. A new generosity, kindness, and unselfishness now characterize him. He prefers to express his

(Continued on page 14)

By Eugene C. Christenbury

Professor, Lee College

I PRAYED TO THE DEVIL

MY EARLIEST memories are of drinking bootleg whiskey from a saucer and learning to roll my cigarettes. I learned to count by counting the spots on cards. My father was always a heavy drinker and made illegal whiskey in hidden stills during the depression thirties. At the age of fifteen I was dealing in narcotics and associating with drug addicts and narcotics dealers. By now I was a skilled gambler and spent much of my time playing cards. I refused to go to school, so I could spend my time on the streets.

My parents moved to a small town where from boredom and to quiet my mother's insistent demands, I went back to high school and finished with good grades. At my mother's request I was detained for several months in a Catholic "home" where we were kept under lock and key. I became interested in the religion of the nuns and priests, so they gave me a set of instructions, anointed me with oil, prayed over me, and told me that I was a Roman Catholic. This was all right with me, as I learned soon that being a Catholic in a Catholic "school" has its advantages. The only real understanding I had of God was I knew that there was One who had threatened to burn up the whole world.

As I was quite intelligent and had excellent grades, I was able, in spite of my record of misbehavior, to gain admittance to a Catholic school of nursing. This was largely due to the great influence of the nuns. In six months I was expelled for drunkenness. Determined not to return to the supervision of my parents, I quietly left the state and entered another school of nursing. Here the nuns worked with me, gave me another set of instructions, prayed for me, and in fourteen months expelled me for drunkenness, misconduct, and insubordination. After this I

did not return home, but worked in various hospitals throughout the West. I had become a confirmed drug addict, and as I did not make enough money to support my habit, I was forced to steal part of my supply from the hospitals and supplement it with alcohol. I entered a third school of nursing and this time I finished and passed my state board examinations.

Soon I began to feel that I was missing something important, and felt restless and miserable. As I made more money now, I began drinking heavily and using more dope than ever before. Failing to find solace in an endless string of taverns, I decided to enroll in one of the universities and study the human mind. So I began my study of psychiatry, psychology and philosophy. I took a course in literature to study the great minds of the past. Perhaps, I thought, they had found the answer. Failing to find any peace, I came to the conclusion that most of them were even more confused than I was. Now education had failed me, liquor had failed me, and even my beloved dope had failed me. I felt lost and even more restless and bewildered than before.

I began suddenly to fear that I was losing my mind, and that I had better slow down and do it fast. Desperately, I turned again to the Catholic church and resumed my search for I knew not what. I was terrified; afraid to be alone at night, afraid to be on the streets, and afraid suddenly of people. All my life I had associated with dangerous people, but never before had I felt this kind of fear. I began

visiting a psychiatrist who was a confirmed atheist. For three hours a week I talked to him, and each week for three more hours a Catholic priest talked to me. My confusion mounted steadily. I had the feeling that sudden destruction was hanging over me and was inescapable. I secured an automatic pistol and carried it with me constantly, to work, to sleep, and about the streets, and still my fears grew.

My doctor told me that there was no more he could do for me. I felt that another of my gods, Medicine, had crumbled before my eyes. I lost my belief in everything. I stopped my visits with the priest although I continued to follow the rituals of the Catholic faith. I began to pray steadily to the devil. I became angry with my head nurse, who was also a drug addict, and for a year I prayed daily for her death. When she killed herself with an overdose of sleeping pills, I became more frightened than ever.

In spite of my gambling and my wages, one night I ran out of money and liquor at the same time. Realizing that delirium tremens were imminent, and knowing that if I was institutionalized I would be cut off from both drugs and liquor, I began to pray earnestly to the devil, "Devil, if you will give me just one bottle of vodka, you can have my soul." I was alone in the hotel room and knew no one there, but somewhere, somehow, I obtained the vodka. I still don't know where it came from.

Sometime during that night or the next, I awoke to see a small dark man in an immaculate navy blue suit sitting beside me. His head was like a large black cat's with shining yellow eyes, and his hands which were folded on his knees, had claws for fingernails. He made no effort to touch me but sat quietly purring like a cat. I tried to tell myself that I was asleep, but I knew that I was not

Illustrated by Chloe Stewart



"I tried to tell myself that I was asleep; but I knew that I was not dreaming . . ."

dreaming and that I could not get by him to the door. So I sat and stared at him until morning. As the sun rose, he disappeared, but I continued to hear him purring for hours. During the days that followed I saw bats and black cats almost every night.

THIS WAS the state to which I had come when I met the first true Christian I ever remember talking to. I had gone to work at a large city-owned institution because I knew that it was easier to obtain drugs there. This lady was the practical nurse with whom I was to work. She greeted me very kindly the first night I came on duty, but her eyes were so sharp that I was convinced she could see right through me. (I found out later she could.) I remember thinking, "If I have to work with this

little fireball, I won't be here very long."

In the weeks that followed she talked to me gently and patiently of Christ and Christian love. I ran from her from one end of the hospital corridor to the other, and still I could not escape her piercing eyes and gentle voice. I grew to love her very much, but I still simply could not stand to have her look at me. At one time I became convinced that she was really the Virgin Mary in disguise. Finally, I told her that I would visit her church one Sunday. When I got to the door and heard them praying, I turned around and went home and got drunk. But the next Sunday I went back. I continued to go back during the following weeks to watch and hear these strange people. In the meantime I bitterly requested of my Christian friend

that she call the circle of "prayer dogs" off my back, and instruct that "prayer gang" to leave me alone. She became very pale and gasped, but all she said was, "I'll not do it." The next night she told me, "You are hanging over hell by a horse hair and it is being sawed in two." She started praying that any time I started to take a drink it would make me sick. Immediately, when I would enter a tavern and order a drink, I would become violently ill and have to leave. As I was depending upon alcohol for most of my food energy, I became quite sick within a few days. Every time I looked into the mirror I would see my face staring back at me saying, "You are going to hell—you are going to hell."

I told my friend of selling my soul to the devil, and of seeing him at my bedside. She explained to

me that the Lord is stronger than the devil and could save me if I would only let Him. I told her that I was a drunk and a drug addict. She replied that Jesus was stronger than demon power. Impatiently I thought that this talk of demons, spiritual lives, and the Holy Ghost was sheer nonsense. Everyone knew that belief in spirits went out with the Middle Ages.

Still I was drawn back to the little church, almost against my will. I held grimly to the bench during each altar call, determined that I would not go kneel with "a bunch of hysterical, emotional, feeble-minded people." Then, the sisters of the church began gathering and kneeling to pray about me. This upset me very much, for I felt hemmed in and cut off from the door. At the same time I was afraid to try to run for fear I would run to the altar.

I began praying at home to the Lord to deliver me if He did have the power. I am sure that many Christians everywhere were praying with me. For hours each day I prayed alone and seemed to get nowhere. Finally, one day a great feeling of peace came over me, and I knew if I would go and kneel at the altar of God's church with His people that the Lord would save me. By now, I was eager to do this or anything else to escape hell and gain heaven.

On the following Y.P.E. night I made my way to the altar and was

saved. It all seemed so simple; yet the feeling that came over me was indescribable. A life filled with sin was blotted out, and a burden that had become intolerable was lifted. I felt stunned. I could not laugh or talk or cry. But I was saved!

The next day, for the first time in months, I slept well. Soon my appetite improved and my health became better. One day after praying alone for hours, I was baptized gloriously with the Holy Ghost. My happy crying, shouting and laughing awoke the nurse who shared my apartment. She listened angrily to me as I spoke in tongues. Later, she told me that I had lost my mind and had at last become completely insane. She soon moved away, but I remembered that the Lord had said that He would have a separated people. I burned all my slacks, shorts, bathing suits, and many of my dresses. I threw away a large box of jewelry, and cleaned house of stacks of immoral literature, and the last of my bar equipment.

ONE DAY I developed a sharp pain in my back and chest that was quite persistent. I told one of the interns at the hospital of it, and he had me X-rayed. He told me there were shadows in both lungs and that he suspected malignancy. I refused to allow him to operate to obtain tissue to examine, but I did permit him to aspirate some fluid from the area which he

examined. Then he told me that his diagnosis was correct.

I refused to believe that I would die, but decided that God could cure cancer if he could cure drug addiction. I told my friends what he said and they explained that God could surely heal sick bodies.

For over two months they prayed with me and for me. The pain became worse and I lost more weight. Finally, one night I became willing to die. "If that is Your will, Lord, let it be," I thought. I lay down on a stretcher to rest and suddenly the pain was gone. The next day I requested a routine hospital chest X ray. The X rays were perfectly clear; the tumors were gone, and the amazed doctors could give no clue as to their disappearance. Puzzled, the doctor took the X rays to compare with the first ones. The next day he told me that he could not understand it. When I asked him if he believed in God, he said he believed only what could be proved as a scientific fact.

That was two and a half years ago. I am free from dope and liquor. My mind is clear. My body is healed. I am happy. I can live and be clean and free to learn more of Christ and His teachings. I can go to heaven. The love of God and the blood of the blessed Saviour have delivered me from the devil. I could never thank Him enough, or praise Him sufficiently. I am so glad that I am saved and can go to heaven where He and His people will be forever.

THE SOURCE OF CHARACTER

(Continued from page 11)

life. He seeks to follow the words of the Master as He prayed, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

F. AS A MAN THINKS IN HIS HEART OF HIMSELF, SO IS HE.

The Apostle Paul reminds us, "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." It is not uncommon to meet people who overestimate their worth and merit and ability. Such an estimate is a weakness and a peril, however, while an underestimate may be a snare.

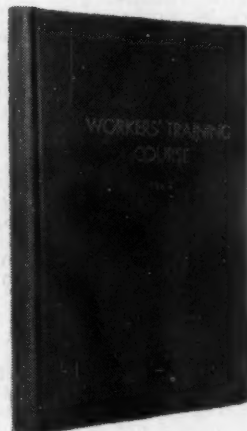
Have you ever asked yourself: "What can I get out of the world?" Some men seem to think the world owes them honor and ease and flattery and position. If these are your thoughts, the world will never be indebted to you. Now ask yourself: "What can I give to the world? I have a responsibility to help others live better lives." As Spurgeon said: "As you learn, teach; as you get, give; as you receive, distribute." If this is your attitude, you are to be congratulated.

As you think in your heart of God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, sin, others, and yourself, you are. These thoughts will constitute your philosophy and plan of life. As a man thinks in his heart, so will he speak and act. For, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

To change a man morally and spiritually his thoughts must be changed. The Word declares, "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."

As we obey these injunctions from the Scripture we will begin to pray, "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

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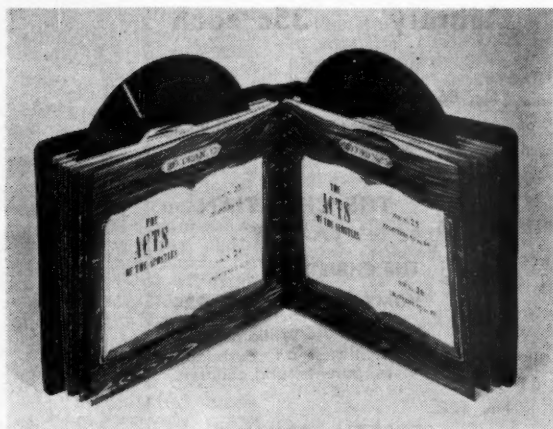
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A TRACT

HAVE YOU?

By Rev. Earl P. Paulk

Have you honestly and sincerely thought where and how it will be with you after death?

You know for sure and very definitely that one day your casket lid will be closed in your face, and you will begin your eternal march through one long, never-ending eternity. **FOR YOU ARE A NEVER-DYING SOUL.**

2 Cor. 4:16, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man (soul) is renewed day by day."

Jonah 2:7, "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord."

You also know that your soul, or inward man, wants to do good—or right.

The glorious news to you is that God gave His Son to save you. Have you accepted Him?

John 3:16, 17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Without Jesus Christ, your never-ending trip through eternity will be eternal doom, despair and punishment for not accepting Him, (Jesus), as your personal Saviour.

Ps. 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

If you have not accepted Him, **YOU CAN NOW.**

John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Rom. 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

GET ACQUAINTED WITH JESUS as your Saviour before you begin your eternal journey.

It has been said that if a little bird could take a grain of sand and fly away and stay ten thousand years, return each 10,000 years for one more grain, and when he would have carried all the grains of sand from the vast seashores and the entire face of the earth—just one grain each ten thousand years—this never-ending eternity would be still rolling on.

WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER TO THIS?

75c per pound

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